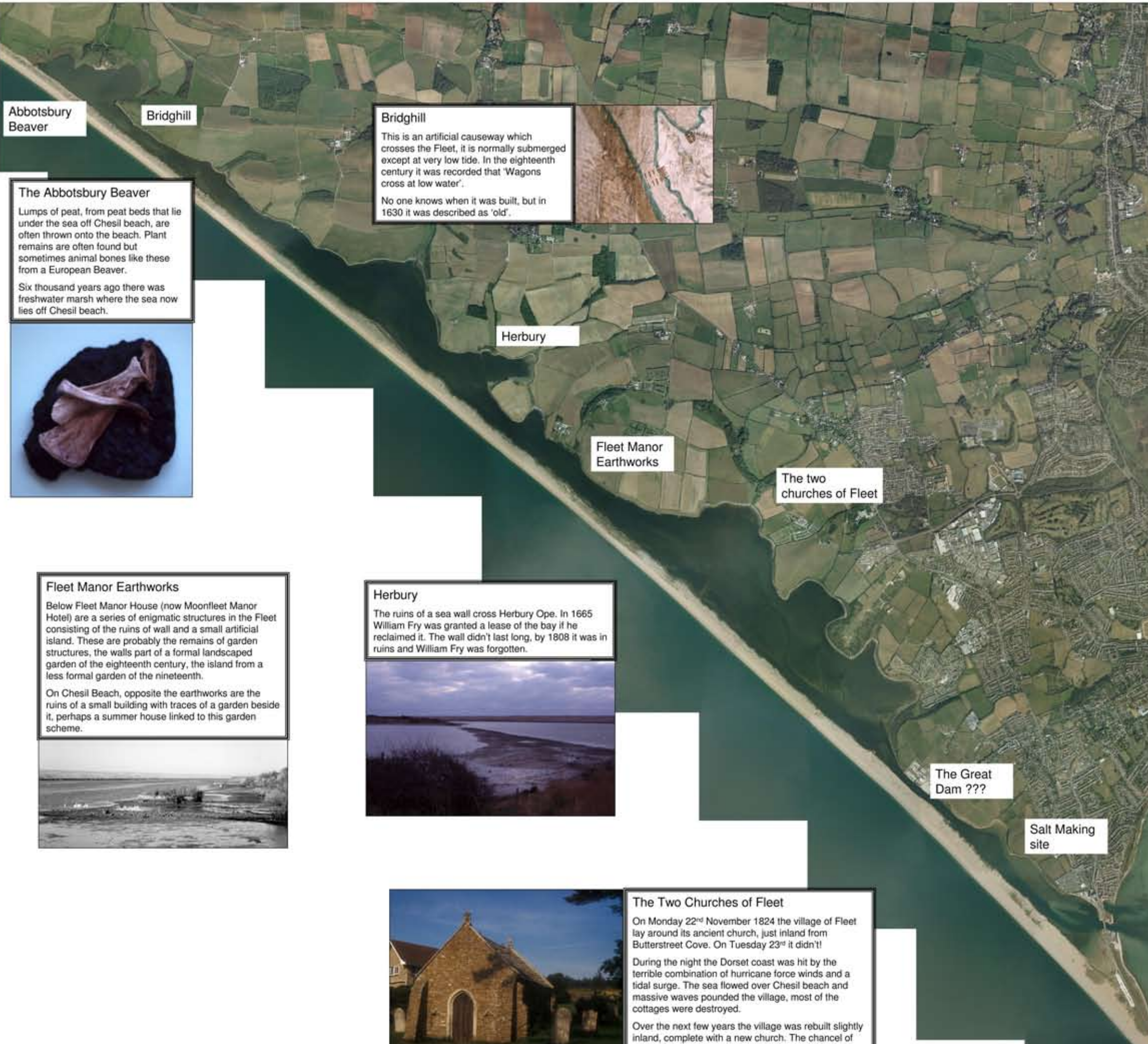


# Archaeology of the Fleet

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Abbotsbury Beaver

Bridghill

**Bridghill**  
This is an artificial causeway which crosses the Fleet, it is normally submerged except at very low tide. In the eighteenth century it was recorded that 'Wagons cross at low water'.  
No one knows when it was built, but in 1630 it was described as 'old'.



**The Abbotsbury Beaver**  
Lumps of peat, from peat beds that lie under the sea off Chesil beach, are often thrown onto the beach. Plant remains are often found but sometimes animal bones like these from a European Beaver.  
Six thousand years ago there was freshwater marsh where the sea now lies off Chesil beach.



Herbury

Fleet Manor Earthworks

The two churches of Fleet

**Fleet Manor Earthworks**  
Below Fleet Manor House (now Moonfleet Manor Hotel) are a series of enigmatic structures in the Fleet consisting of the ruins of wall and a small artificial island. These are probably the remains of garden structures, the walls part of a formal landscaped garden of the eighteenth century, the island from a less formal garden of the nineteenth.  
On Chesil Beach, opposite the earthworks are the ruins of a small building with traces of a garden beside it, perhaps a summer house linked to this garden scheme.



**Herbury**  
The ruins of a sea wall cross Herbury Ope. In 1665 William Fry was granted a lease of the bay if he reclaimed it. The wall didn't last long, by 1808 it was in ruins and William Fry was forgotten.



The Great Dam ???

Salt Making site



**The Two Churches of Fleet**  
On Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> November 1824 the village of Fleet lay around its ancient church, just inland from Butterstreet Cove. On Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> it didn't!  
During the night the Dorset coast was hit by the terrible combination of hurricane force winds and a tidal surge. The sea flowed over Chesil beach and massive waves pounded the village, most of the cottages were destroyed.  
Over the next few years the village was rebuilt slightly inland, complete with a new church. The chancel of the old church was repaired to serve the graveyard.



**The Great Dam ???**  
In 1630 an attempt was made to drain the Fleet!  
A massive dam was built across the fleet, wind pumps were set up and the Fleet was drained to the extent that a man could cross the mud with board on his feet.  
The scheme failed, as water leaked through Chesil beach and lawyers argued over who actually owned the Fleet.  
Where was the dam, no one knows but the most likely place is somewhere along the Narrows.

**Salt Making hearth**  
Below high water mark in Pirates Cove is the remains of an Iron Age salt making hearth. Here, over two thousand years ago, when relative sea level was much lower, sea water was boiled to make salt.  
Similar sites may still lie undiscovered under the waters of the Fleet

